

(JL reading) transcription of Andre Lwoff's ltr.
dated January 3, 1985

Dear Joshua:

Alas I have not followed the illustrious route tread by so many writers, scientists, generals, politicians etc. I do not keep I have never kept a diary. Sometimes I regret it. Of course I remember the 1946 Cold Spring Harbor Symposium (it was my first visit to the states). In fact the only important scientific event the most spectacular was the announcement of the sexuality of *Escherichia coli*. The transmission of characters from bacteria to bacteria was of course well known: the transforming principle. But that bacteria were able to copulate had to my mind never been foreseen. Somebody maybe I raised the objection that symbiosis between two deficient bacteria could explain your data but you masterfully eliminated this hypothesis. Anyhow the fact behind sexuality was in itself interesting for those in love with bacteria but I wonder if anyone except you perhaps had realized that the discovery of bacterial copulation would allow the birth and blooming of molecular biology and genetics during the next ten years - an explosive, unpredicted blooming. This is all I can say.

With kind regards.

Andre Lwoff

P.S. You may use this letter as you wish but please correct the mistakes concerning my English.

(His response to my query: "did he have any diary or other contemporary notes about Cold Spring Harbor, July 1946".)